groin as the memory of Spock's hard fingers probing between his cheeks filled his mind with sweet, seductive flames. Slowly his hands slid over his body, trying to recapture the sensation of Spock's touch, until he reached down and curled his fingers around his throbbing penis, pumping himself as he visualized Spock thrusting into him, his body responding with hungry eagerness to the images, aching, frantic for release--and unable to achieve it. He groaned and writhed on the bed until he was exhausted, then staggered into the bathroom to drown his desire in cold water. When he returned to the bed he buried his face in a pillow, locked his hands around an ornately carved post. Gradually he drifted into a restless sleep.

In the morning Kirk awoke to find a warm weight lying next to him on the bed. With a sleepy murmur of contentment, he rolled over and pressed close. Soft fur, not the smooth skin he expected brushed his cheek. He opened his eyes, only to find Lashmi's inquisitive face peering down at him. Feeling slightly foolish, he caressed the silky ears, and a rough wet tongue bathed his face in approval as the great cat set up a purr.

Movement in the room caught his attention and he looked up to see a slave setting out a tray. The man wore the green tunic that indicated a castrate, a slave who had been neutered to serve the women and pleasure slaves of the household.

Kirk was about to get up when the itchy heat between his legs warned him that he was still sexually aroused. Embarrassed, he looked for his clothes, but they were missing.

"Would you please bring me my robe," he asked shyly.

The slave shook his head. "The master forbade it, sir," he said respectfully.

Kirk remembered that he had, and then shrugged. Everyone in the house must know by now what he was to Spock. With an indifference he was far from feeling, he got out of bed and went over to the table.

After he had eaten the slave relayed more instructions. He was to be assisted in the bath. Under the expressionless gaze of the slave, not even cold water would subdue his erection, and when the slave left a second attempt at masturbation also proved futile.

Frantic, Kirk paced the room, longing for Spock as the hours crawled past, his mind a seething haze of jealousy and lust as he pictured his lover lingering with the woman T'Pring, giving her the caresses he longed for.

To pass the time he explored the walled garden, finding a pool where he could swim. He lay in the sun for a short time to dry off, but his master valued the unusual whiteness of his body, and he darred not risk becoming tanned. Soon he was forced to retire indoors. Lashmi was his only companion, and he talked aloud to the intelligent animal, pouring into her patient ears all his love and longing for Spock.

As his desire grew wilder, Kirk found himself drawn to the wall painting, to the image of the youth who had reminded him of Spock. At one point, in desperation, he raised himself on tiptoe and kissed the painted image, pressing his swollen genitals to the cool wall. Then, ashamed, he wanderec into the garden again.

It was late afternoon before anyone disturbed him. Then two of the castrates entered and set up a small table for a meal. Kirk watched them, miserably conscious of the erect organ between his legs but neither of them changed expression by a fraction. They must be used to pleasure slaves, but he wasn't used to being one! As they left, Spock finally entered, stripping off his robe as he came toward the human. At the sight of that powerful, naked body, Kirk's penis throbbed.

"You seem in some discomfort, Jim." There was laughter in Spock's voice. "Come and embrace me." His hands closed on Kirk's arms, pulling him close. Kirk struggled violently, and in sheer surprise the Vulcan let him go. "Jim? What's wrong?"

"Wrong?" Kirk turned his head away to hide the pain in his eyes. "I thought you cared for me. I couldn't sleep last night, wanting you, jealous of T'Pring. I waited all day, hour after hour, and you didn't come." His voice deepened. "You've got me where you want me, haven't you? I could have gone with Foster...taken you within sight of safety...It wasn't because you were hurt, or to pay a debt. I don't have that much pride! I don't have any! I couldn't bear not to see you again because I love you." The fire went out of him and he slumped onto the edge of the bed. "But of course I'm only a slave, so it doesn't matter. You just take what you want and give nothing. I thought I couldn't bear lonliness--but I can't bear this..." The tears that roughened his voice threatened to spill, and he dropped his head to hide them.

"Jim," Spock's hands were gentle on his shoulders. "Jim, you are wrong. I also love you."

Unable to believe what he heard, Kirk made no resistance as the strong hands lifted his head so that his eyes met Spock's.

"I love you," the Vulcan repeated. "Later we will talk, for there is much, much you must learn, my barbarian, but for now, you must believe me. I cannot bear your grief."

For the first time Kirk heard uncertainty in the usually confident voice, read an almost wistful appeal in the dark eyes. 'I cannot bear your grief,' that from Spock, who would have died without appeal.

Slowly Kirk nodded. "I believe you. At least, I believe that you believe it. I'll believe anything you want, if you just love me."

The Vulcan hesitated, troubled by Kirk's helpless resignation. There was so much he wanted to say, to make the Human understand, but Kirk's overwhelming need now was for physical proof of his love, and he could not resist the trembling body pressed to his.

Kirk sighed as Spock's arms went around him and a hot, wet tongue urgently probed his lips, he opened his mouth, welcoming the invader, while his hand reached between their tight-pressed bodies to fondle the Vulcan's semi-erect organ. Spock groaned at his touch, and began to push him down toward the couch, spreading his legs wide so that he could kneel between them, his hands exploring the receptive body.

The small, tender nipples tempted Spock irresistably, and his mouth fastened on each in turn,